

Madam Speaker, after Congress has successfully completed action on the first 100 hours, we now begin a critical 100 days for the future of our engagement in Iraq, United States policy in the Middle East and our struggle against violent fundamentalism. Between now and the Memorial Day recess, 100 days for Congress to reassert itself as a coequal branch of government, as envisioned by the framers of the Constitution, to change the course in Iraq.

This is a decisive moment. It is time for every one of us who would be a leader to lay our cards on the table. Each must be true to our own conscience and to the responsibility of office by letting the American people know honestly and directly what we stand for and what we would do in Iraq.

This resolution gives clear and concise voice to the desires of the American people. It expresses support for our troops and demands that we not place more of them at risk without a reason or a plan. And I strongly support it.

Along with this resolution, the Congress under Speaker Pelosi's Democratic leadership has already done more to provide oversight and accountability than Republicans over the last 5 years. We have held 50 hearings on the conduct of the war, fraud and failure in reconstruction efforts, and the outrage of our troops being sent into harm's way without the equipment they need. I applaud the efforts of our leadership on the Appropriations Committee to end the practice of giving too much to the wrong people to do the wrong thing.

However, these are only the first steps. We should not only oppose escalation of the war, but we should pass legislation to bring the war to an end responsibly. Investigations must be followed by specific and personal accountability for crimes that have been permitted in the conduct of this war.

We should use the power of the purse to ensure that funds go specifically to keep our soldiers safe, rebuild badly damaged military readiness, undertake new diplomatic efforts and support the Iraqi people, not an open-ended occupation.

For the last 2 years, I have been working with concerned citizens in Oregon to develop a

responsible plan to end the war and provide the best hope for a better future in Iraq. Last month, I introduced comprehensive legislation, the New Direction For Iraq, H.R. 663, as a model for the kind of legislation that Congress should enact, and I am confident will enact.

This legislation would bring the troops home, require a comprehensive diplomatic effort, redirect reconstruction assistance, promote international efforts to disarm militias, investigate and punish war profiteering and deal with the 2 million Iraqi refugees who have been forced to flee their country, people the administration has only recently been able to recognize.

A word about Iran. It is a complex puzzle, more difficult than any of us imagine and one that poses real challenges. But as the President marches us closer and closer to a major provocation, maybe a new war, whether intentionally or not, Congress should not let itself be steamrolled or lied to, as it was with Iraq; Congress must assert itself with real diplomacy and a real strategy.

It is also time that America lived up to our ideals. No more torture, kidnapping and unauthorized wiretaps; no more lying and unnecessary secrecy; not treating the Constitution as a suggestion or using false claims about national security to score political points against those of us who have been right about this war from the beginning.

We must start treating the public like a partner and recognize that they are far ahead of the President and the Republican leadership. I am just frustrated to hear false analogies to the dark days of World War II or to the Civil War. We are bogged down in somebody else's civil war, and we have been doing it longer than World War II or the Civil War, with no end in sight, until now.

They should join us in taking this conversation to coffee shops, churches, campuses and conference rooms, working with the American people.

Over the next 100 days, I will continue to fight for a comprehensive plan that I am confident will come forward. It is in the honor of Travis Bradach Nall, a constituent of mine who was killed in Iraq the very day the President taunted the insurgents to "bring it on."

For Travis and over 3,000 of his brave comrades who have given their lives, I urge support of this resolution as a critical first step to bringing this tragic war to a close.